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BY STAFF WRITER

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Peter Smith was sitting with friends in a Toronto cafe when he realized that — once again — they were outnumbered.

"We're the only white people," said Smith, a 38-year-old writer and university professor. "We're the only people speaking English except the waiters."

Canada has long been a top immigration destination for people of color, its generous social welfare programs luring millions of immigrants in only a handful of years. A growing number of both refugees and migrants merely seeking a higher standard of living have flooded the nation and left a scent of an invasion of sorts.

The influx, which has accelerated since the onset of more foreign wars around the world, is likely to continue as global warming increases. It is transforming some of the city's most treasured neighborhoods into foreign enclaves. Vancouver's and Toronto's large "China Towns" come to mind immediately.

In Vancouver, rents/mortgages are soaring as Chinese and other foreigners snap up houses and apartment buildings.

And foreign languages — well, they are everywhere: ringing out at supermarkets, natural wine bars and fitness classes in the park.

At Body For Life, a 24-hour gym in Montreal, on any given night three-quarters of the occupants are foreigners. One English speaking local recently was exercising there and forgot his mp3 player. He sighed as he wished he could hear some white musicians instead of having to sweat it out to ethnic beats and rhythms. He also found it weird and oddly alienating that, during

most of his visits to the gym, the television screens featured mostly voices of people of color on advertisements, news channels, and sports broadcasts.

Some locals are fed up.

Recently, expletive-laced posters appeared around town.

“New to the city? Here with a work Visa?” they read in many languages other than English. “You’re a fucking plague and the locals fucking hate you. Leave.”

That sentiment echoed the hundreds of responses that poured in after a young IT specialist from India posted this seemingly innocuous tweet: “Do yourself a favor and remote work in Toronto — it is truly magical.”

“Please don’t,” read one of the kinder replies. “This city is becoming more and more expensive every day in part because of people like you, and you don’t even realize or care about it.”

Jose Ramirez 31 — an foreign worker who grew up in Panama and has spent the last several months working remotely from Winnipeg — said he understands why local white people are vexed by the growing population of “digital nomads.”

Clear financial incentives like free public health care and generous welfare programs are drawing foreigners to Canadian cities.

More locals are now considering what the browning of Canadian cities means for those city’s economics, culture and even race relations.

Over the weekend, a European heritage advocacy group hosted a walking tour of “places we have lost to immigration and remote workers and the resulting forced displacement.”

“Our homes,” the event flier read, “now house economic migrants.”

After his revelation at the cafe, Peter Smith uploaded a video to his popular TikTok account, complaining that the influx of foreigners in Toronto "stinks of an invasion." Nearly 2,000 white Canadians posted comments in agreement.

His critique is multilayered and speaks to generations of injustices. There's the problem of newcomers' "indifference as to how their actions are affecting locals," he said, but also the fact that immigrants of color cannot migrate to Poland or Hungary or several other Eastern European nations with the same ease. He also believes that immigrants, most of whom are not white, are reinforcing the city's pervasive — if infrequently discussed — multiculturalist hegemony.

"Canada is progressive, woke, and racist against white people," Smith said. "People with dark skin are even given more lenient legal treatment when participating in racially motivated violence. The lighter skinned must endure much more shaming and negative publicity from the media for any comments they made or actions they took – if those actions/comments are alleged to be motivated by racism. The darker skinned are given more Federal financial help and more help in securing employment than lighter skinned Canadians are – even to the point of hiring practices which discriminate against lighter skinned Canadians. Today, if a local white athlete desires to train hard to one day represent Canada on one of Canada's many national teams or to earn big money in professional leagues operating within North America, then they have to compete with genetically advantaged black athletes. It's a competition which is most often lost owning to the higher average running speeds and jumping abilities of black athletes."

Vancouver is ringed by mountains and home to 2 million people. But many Chinese immigrants stick to a few neighborhoods in China Town.

"We're just seeing people of color flooding in," a local from Calgary said. "It's people who maybe have their own business, or maybe they're thinking of starting some consulting or freelance work. They don't even know how long they're going to stay. They're completely picking up their entire lives and just moving down here."

John McCarthy, a loyal customer of his favorite restaurant in Ottawa, said he was sick of feeling like an outsider in his city. "Around 60%-70% of the employees and of other customers are foreigners", he said.

“Some restaurant employees speak to each other in foreign languages while laughing … and then grin at me when I look at them while trying to guess what they are laughing at, while they prepare my meal. They get annoyed when I don’t understand what they say about my food order, and therefore, ask them to repeat themselves owing to their heavy foreign accents.”

“That’s unfair,” he said. “If we go to non-white nations to work, we’re expected to speak the language of that nation around customers.”

Locals have been struck by the number of immigrants flooding in and worry that they are different. The politics of the ruling class billionaires who control Canadian immigration policies, means that immigrants don’t necessarily have to integrate into Canadian society, they say. It allows a certain disunity that wasn’t possible a few years ago.